

Message Text

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ORIGIN EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

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TO USMISSION NATO

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

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AMEMBASSY PARIS

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 101858

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, NATO, BE, NL

SUBJECT: F-104 REPLACEMENT AIRCRAFT

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REF: USNATO 2556

1. DEFENSE WILL BE PREPARED TO RECEIVE A EUROPEAN TEAM (POSSIBLY HEADED BY DEFENSE MINISTER FOSTERVOLL) BEGINNING JUNE 24 TO EXPLORE ALL ASPECTS OF THIS SUBJECT AND WILL AWAIT FURTHER DETAILS OF ORGANIZATION AND PLANS OF THE TEAM.

2. IN VIEW OF THE RECENT SCHLESINGER LETTER TO CONGRESS, ON A U.S. LIGHTWEIGHT FIGHTER PROGRAM, THE TEAM WILL PROBABLY HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT THE POSSIBLE ECONOMIC ADVANTAGES TO THEM IN THE EVENT OF A COMMON CHOICE OF AIRCRAFT. WE ARE PREPARED TO RECEIVE WITH AN OPEN MIND THE VIEWPOINTS AND QUESTIONS THE EUROPEANS WILL HAVE WHEN THEY VISIT DEFENSE TO EXPLORE MORE FULLY THE RAMIFICATIONS OF THE STATEMENTS GIVEN TO THEM EARLIER IN THE LETTERS TO DEFENSE MINISTERS, BEARING IN MIND THE APPARENT DESIRE AT LEAST OF BELGIUM AND THE NETHERLANDS TO REACH THEIR OWN DECISION LATER THIS YEAR.

3. THERE ARE OBVIOUS ADVANTAGES IN A COMMON TRANSATLANTIC CHOICE OF A LIGHTWEIGHT FIGHTER, AND WE FEEL IT IMPORTANT THAT THE ADVANTAGES OF A COMMON CHOICE BE CLEARLY OUTLINED.

WE WILL BE CONSIDERING AMONG THE AGENCIES HERE THE FOREIGN POLICY ISSUES INVOLVED AND WILL BE PREPARING TO RESPOND TO THESE AND OTHER QUESTIONS THE EUROPEANS WILL UNDOUBTEDLY HAVE, INCLUDING THE QUESTIONS ALREADY RAISED BY THE NORWEGIANS IN PARAGRAPH 3(B) OF USNATO 2437.

4. DEFENSE WILL PLAN TO GIVE TEAM A COMPREHENSIVE BRIEFING BRIEFING ON THE LWF PROGRAM AS PART OF THE EXPLORATORY DISCUSSIONS IN WASHINGTON PRIOR TO THE TEAM'S VISITS TO CONTRACTOR FACILITIES BUT WILL AVOID GIVING EUROPEANS THE IMPRESSION THAT WE ARE TRYING TO DOMINATE OR CONTROL THEIR DECISION. RUSH

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Message Attributes

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